

NR--Incident Management Teams Meeting
Aviation Breakout
April 9, 2008

Aviation Commo Trailers:

- Most are self sufficient with power---equipped with radios, phones, AFF—need to educate finance, ops, ic's etc on the benefits---especially in remote areas
- Need to monitor camp personnel from accessing the wireless signal; Wireless capabilities—limit the people from camp that access the wireless connection---only have about 750 bytes....when too many access the service, it becomes slower, and ineffective
- All contracts are different---when ordering ensure that you are getting what you order—keep track of good/marginal operators and spread the word
- read the contract---for use of wireless, satellite phones, etc
- Many have computers---but the software is cheap---no Word or Excel on many

Where to get a list of available contractors----when you order --use the specs from the contracts you know to ensure that the Buying Teams will order what you need. Buying Teams will question the order, so use that as the opportunity to educate them on the requirements for FF, phones, etc.

ABS—issues

Some teams have set up a dedicated computer for doing ABS; Still some problems with the system

Light Helicopters:

- Requiring to have the P-23 Radio---cost to purchase in \$13,500 with as much as a 6 month backlog to get....adding to the difficulty of finding T3
- IR Helicopters: Equipped with Radiometric—has IR, telemetric---know what you are ordering—understand the contract
- Some vendors have strong ties with Teams---and tend to show up with those teams---they are very sophisticated marketers and good at selling their product
- \$7000/hr to use mapping equipment; \$1200 to use just for recon ship---cannot do external loads, or crew shuttle---only other mission is recon.
- Contract is out of Region 6---being renewed this year
- Can use the “performance eval” as a way to communicate to the company any marketing behaviors that are too aggressive.
- Issues with Manager swap...have to provide a “shortcourse” to new manager so that they understand the contract and do not unintentionally commit to a service.

- What is the data on this...need to get some numbers

Air Attack:

- Pre-ordering the platform---need to be more proactive so that ATGS and platform arrive together
- Consider the operating environment for the platform...may want to put language specific to elevation, terrain, DA, etc when ordering (Skymaster...at Wicked Hicks)
- ASM---R1 trying to contract with one out of Texas....

Air Attack Trainees:

- Teams need to get a dedicated trainee for a few assignments---but good for them to experience other trainers and other environments.
- Exposure to other air attacks---need lots of assignments to get good at it
- Some Forests doing “Ride-along” –to screen potential candidates
- Some Ads/Air Attacks concerned with liability...so choose to get out of the position
- Air Attack Trainees—many not moving forward and becoming qualified...have too many other quals, or other commitments---need some incentives to get agency people to step up and get into the position
- Some regions---developing an Air Attack (AA) program where dedicated AAs are hired for the purposes of providing the service, also training and “growing” a pool of AAs
- Need supervisor commitment for the development of potential candidate Air Attacks; consider cross-training with R9/R3, etc
- Incentives—pay needs to be commensurate with the duties on the fire not their GS-level at home
- Task book being reviewed to possibly move some of the requirements from “I” to tasks that can be done or accomplished in the flight simulator---maybe use the simulator/sand tables for final evaluation and sign off.
- Retention factor---need to have a plan to retain ATGSs; Feasibility study recognized that to get to ASMs we need to have a large pool of ATGSs....these also need to become positions with career ladder opportunities; Position could be shared among regions with offsetting fire seasons; options for platform contract sharing should be looked at too

- Is the DIVS qualification holding us up? There are ICT3s and 4s with lots of aviation experience on Exclusive Use Helicopter crews, but due to training requirements for their own positions. Many go from SR CRWB to HELM.....but have a depth of aviation and firefighting experience. HLCO—does not require DIVS qual (STRC is required)

Fixed Wing Management news:

New Lead Plane/ASM contracts want 10-25 planes---only one response to the solicitation from Small Bus; will be going out again with a new solicitation—probably won't see it this year---goal is to have the same aircraft ---not different makes and models

SEATs:

Big Timber SEAT Base going from Cat 3 to Cat 4---will be a permanent reload base
Sheridan, WY will go from cat 2 to 3---will be vendor operator

CDA—3 -802s

Grgvill—2 -802s

Ronan—1 -802

Blgs—1 -802

Missed ONE???

Turbine Dramaders being phased out---, but 2 at LWT

Minuteman---has 1 -502

BLM—is going to a different contracting system for the SEATs...”On call” contracting

Portable retardant bases ---take out of the Mob Guide, because we know they are there, and they can still be ordered...but Leo wants to stop “advertising”

CL-215—use and management

- If you are going to use them---call Joel Kerley (BLM in Boise) for information about their use and management; Cell—208-859-7215; Office—208-387-5371
- Moving them is very expensive---up to \$100,000
- Maggie D, and Barry H---put together a plan for using them as a Regional resource---need to locate this plan for reference;
- Work with Recreation people on lake use; don't need to shut the lake down to use them
- Effectiveness is reduced when we try to use them as an airtanker...they are more effective when used in tandem (like SEATS)—they are limited in what they can accomplish—use them for the right reasons

- ANS issues? Are they being addressed----should be part of the “pre-call” for where they are going to be working---designate dip sites; Initial briefing to them (CL-215 guys)...is to communicate issues with ANS, airports, designated lakes to dip from....
- Management of Aircraft—state of MN will bring their own Mgmt
- Dispatched same as an Air Tanker----but don’t generally stick a Lead Plane with them—they are IA qualified

Management of Aviation Assets during fire Season: NR Perspective:

- IA always first priority---not the large fires that have been calling for and are in need of aircraft resources; Big fires do receive priorities
- Sharing is an effective way to maximize the use of aircraft---while also minimizing travel, costs, etc.
- The Mgmt of aircraft resources were more effective this year---moved aircraft closer to the bulk of the work
- Teams need to do a better job of establishing trust with host units so that we can utilize IA resources without “stealing”---cut it loose when the units need resources back
- NR and NICC managed CWN vs Exclusive Use---to align with cost containment direction
- Sharing of aircraft---more than just a success story---there are issues, and things slip through the crack---briefings, communication (wrong frequencies), flight following, familiarity with the incident; “who’s in charge?” issue
- Take a look the delegation of authorities before signed by the ICs---look for opportunities to wordsmith to ensure that communication and controls are in place for sharing of aircraft---change language that may be a problem
- Teams should explore opportunities to standardize and aviation briefing packet that can be uploaded daily to the NRCG webpage...for access by aviation personnel---ideas include the 220, IAP, freqs, fire map, Helispot summary, pilot map (pocket buddies), contacts, etc. Steve C. will develop a standardized package and work with NRCG/ Team Ops to be posted on a website---for tanker base, air attack, others located off-base.
- Michael Keator will research how Stanich’s T1 Team accomplished this while on assignment in Florida (07). Needs to be password protected.

National Updates---Pat Norbury, National Office

- Moving towards more centralized resource management---constrained budget, cost of aviation resources---static budget combined with pressure to become more cost efficient—need more nationalized contracts, more centralized resources
- Many aspects of the Feasibility study are being further developed and explored for implementation, verified at regional levels for ASM, ATGS, IR and ADFF.
- National Helicopter Contracts—biggest change in type I and II Helicopter contracts---Mark Rounsaville—tasked us with combining all National contracts into 1 large contract: National Contracts for T1 and T2 helicopters---turned into the “Big 35 contract”
- Gathered 5 years of data for Helicopters use---data showed large spike in use of aircraft during certain timeframes of the year (surge)---decision was made to contract for EU aircraft to save cost.
- Some protests occurred as a result of this solicitation, settlement came in Sept to re-solicit contract...it now called the “Big 34” Confident that all 34 will be awarded 3 wks after the close date of Apr 14...hope to have helos on contract by June 1. Solicitation is for limited aircraft...not standard category
- Helicopter IA 25—the contract for the National type II ships and Regional IA ships --2 year contract; solicitation will overlap with other 9 contracts every 2 years
- Will run solicitation of National and IA ships (big 25) first---so that there is no conflict with the Big 34 solicitation.
- Management for Big 34—have allocated \$47, 500 per helicopter for management of the Big 34 resources...to be allocated to the host units through the Region. Funds will be distributed to the Regions once the awards are made. NMAC in conjunction with NICC will be moving these resources as they see fit...driven by cost, efficiency, large fire occurrence, etc...NMAC will take an active role on where the resources are placed.
- Ordering will not be through the host unit---will go through GACCs.
- CWN helicopter contract—not on street...still at department level for review; many levels of review required at agency and department level...including OGC. This review process is slowing the process for getting these to the street. They have 60 days for review.
- FS went out with a Urgent 90 day CWN contract solicitation...should have this in place by May 1st, while we are waiting for OGC to work their magic at the WO level.

- Airtankers---solicitation went out in Jan—for 5 fixed years...20 bids 19 P2V and P3, and one DC-10; Put Airworthiness responsibility onto the Vendor---came out with continuing AW program....put load monitoring equip on to determine how missions effective life of aircraft....NASA helped evaluate the continuing AW that were submitted by vendors.
- DC-10 ...Did not fall in the competitive price range for award, so subsequently not awarded to 10 Tanker....If tanker 10 had been awarded contract with P2V and P3, then only 6 to 7 P2/P3 would have been able to be awarded...due to excessive cost.
- 747 has redesigned their tank system, and will be testing and looking for future contract opportunities.
- Any future Very large AirTanker contract needs to include language that the contractor must provide a “turn-key” operation...must identify in each GACC, one operational location that they can work out of....including reload considerations and weight limits of ramps
- Evaluation form for the Very Large AT---need very detailed evaluation/feedback from users...Air Attacks, Leadplanes, Ground Ops, etc.....regarding performance and effectiveness.
- ADFF Study is finished recommendations have historically been very controversial; model results driven by cost and speed...model is recognized to be the tool not to make the final decision---management judgment, expertise, etc must also enter the decision. Fire Directors are validating regional components and will develop implementation recommendations.
- 3 proposed options---a regional; inter-regional and a national---discussion is ongoing to agree to implementation.
- Airtanker base study—component of the Feasibility study on going review at regional level and options. Looking at typing of bases and retardant contracts lengths.

CTRs

Management of off-site personnel....who signs time for Air Attacks? CTRs need to be faxed to timekeeper or finance of the Team/Fire AA is working for...not signed by offsite personnel, unless it's a tanker base, and time is verified.

Hazard Pay Issues:

Read and adhere to the 2008 Incident Business Handbook regarding H-pay; Activities must fit into one of these 4 categories: Palm IR, Cargo/Hover hook ops, PSD, or limited

control flights.....must be a significant safety issue for the aircraft....not the passengers or operators.

Availability of ASGS/AOBs for Teams

Task Book System

Quality control with signing people off as fully qualified

Task books must be signed by qualified people—people qualified in the position for which they are evaluating

Air Operations Plan for Type I Teams:

All Teams have different protocols, but should try to standardize as much as possible

Could we review this and make it a standard document for Air Ops for all NR IMTs—both T1/T2 Teams

Incident Aviation Managers Workgroup---subcommittee of NRCG:

Need to resurrect this committee to accomplish some of the quality assurance that formerly was accomplished by Bob Wing, Paul Linse and Maggie Dougherty---they provided oversight for mentoring assignments and training and recruiting of ATGS, ASGS, and AOBs....also hosted Incident Aviation Managers meetings where issues were discussed and new information shared.

Kim Thomas will research this...and notify the group of the date of the next meeting and invite participation from the Incident Aviation Group

Air Attack Updates:

Ken Wabaunsee provided updates on the ATGS program....he is developing a recruiting/trainee list and will try to develop a training plan to get them qualified.

JHA—for Air Attack missions (ride alongs)...will be posted on a website for accessibility

Incident Aerial Ignition:

Plan for early...know where you will get the machine, the balls, and the operator...most Forests will lend a PSD, but insist on their own operator. Helitorch Ops require more planning and logistical support....so plan ahead!!

TFR vs IA responsibility:

May need to use geographic boundaries instead of “under the TFR”....so know the IA responsibilities and any jurisdictional/fire protection issues associated with multi-jurisdictional fires.

SAFECOMS:

- Appropriate use is for tracking safety concerns and trends.....not a tool for the CO to use in performance evaluations of vendors.

- Although HCM-1 (Daily Diary) in the IHOG instructs Helicopter Managers to reference SAFECOMS, we need to re-educate and let them know to track events, but do not reference the filing of a SAFECOM.
- This will be an upcoming change in the IHOG Forms package—as this instruction is in error
- Daily Diaries are tools for the CO, and referencing a SAFCOM violates the intended purpose of the SAFECOM as a tool to provide open communication on safety issues
- It does not mean that information submitted will not be followed up on, when appropriate, but the information will not be used for punitive purposes
- SAFECOM should encourage a “reporting culture”
- Do not use it as a “gotcha”---discuss issues with involved parties before submitting
- SAFECOM is the “follow-up” action, not the first action to deal with safety concerns....call HIPs, RASMs, AMI’s, FAO’s, UAO’s as appropriate as the first line of action